



Sally Scully, moderator

December 5-6, 1986

Trustees Auditorium,

Asian Art Museum

PATH TO MESSIAH

HANDEL'S LONDON

The San Francisco Symphony presents four holiday performances of *Handel's Messiah*, December 17-20, 8PM in Davies Symphony Hall. Conductor Nicholas McGegan leads the San Francisco Symphony orchestra and chorus with soprano Julianne Baird, counter-tenor Derek Lee Ragin, tenor Grayson Hirst, and bass-baritone David Thomas. For tickets and information call the Symphony Box Office (415) 431-5400.

George Frederick Handel is, of course, one of the world's greatest composers and *Messiah* is certainly his most popular work. In addition, however, his life and career are in many ways typical of the age in which he lived and of his adopted country, England. When Handel arrived in London in 1711, England was still ruled by the last of the Stuarts and was recovering from a series of ruinous wars. The next fifty years saw the arrival of the Hanoverians (Handel's patrons in London), a largely peaceful Europe, and England's emergence as a great international mercantile power. People flocked to London to seek their fortunes and a new breed of "country-squire" politicians replaced the high nobility in the corridors of power. The aristocracy, who had previously been sole patrons of the arts, gave way to the rising bourgeoisie who often had very different tastes. For example, they had a distrust of foreign art and a preference for vocal music in English. The painter Hogarth may be seen as the epitome of this new style, and engraving, of which he was a master, the new popular medium. In literature, the epoch saw the development of the English novel and the first flowering of British journalism.

PROGRAM SUMMARY PREPARED BY NICHOLAS MCGEGAN

	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1986, 8-11PM
LECTURE	"Musical Life in Handel's London," Philip Brett, Department of Music, UC Berkeley
PERFORMANCE	Secular vocal duets composed by Handel and later used in <i>Messiah</i> , Li-Chan Chen and Susan Patterson, soprano, Elisabeth LeGuin, cello, and Elaine Thornburgh, harpsichord
RECEPTION	

	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1986, 10AM-6PM
LECTURES	"Handel's London: The Full Tide of Human Experience," Thomas Laqueur, Department of History, UC Berkeley "Sounds and Sights of London," Louise Lippincott, Associate Curator of Painting, J. Paul Getty Museum
LUNCH	(12:00-1:30)
LECTURES	"Escaping the City: The Pastoral Retreat," Bruce Robertson, Department of Art, Oberlin "The Career of <i>Messiah</i> ," Vance George, Choral Director, San Francisco Symphony Chorus
PANEL	"The Final Chorus," chaired by Sally Scully with lecturers George, Laqueur, Lippincott and Robertson
TEA RECEPTION	

Each lecture will be preceded by a five minute reading by Peter Donat, actor, from contemporary source materials coordinated with topics of discussion

	WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1986, 8PM
CONCERT	<i>Handel: Messiah</i> , Nicholas McGegan, conducting; San Francisco Symphony, Davies Hall

REGISTRATION

To register, please fill in the registration form below, enclose payment and mail to:

HUMANITIES WEST
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California 94118

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	REGULAR FEE	HUMANITIES WEST FRIENDS MUSEUM SOCIETY MEMBERS	STUDENTS WITH VALID I.D.	TOTAL RESERVATIONS	TOTAL PAID
FULL REGISTRATION <i>Friday and Saturday only, excludes Wednesday concert</i>	\$50	\$45	\$25	\$	
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5 <i>8-11pm</i>	\$20	\$18	\$10	\$	
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 <i>10am-6pm</i>	\$45	\$40	\$20	\$	
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17 <i>Concert, 8pm, reservations must be received by November 15</i>	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$	
<i>Total Enclosed</i>					

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☐ Please check here if you would like information
about joining as a Friend of Humanities West.

Friday and Saturday events will take place
at the Trustees Auditorium, Asian Art
Museum; The Wednesday Messiah concert
will be performed at Davies Symphony Hall.

Upon receipt of your registration, you will
be sent an information packet containing
transportation information, a list of
suggested readings, a schedule, registration
confirmation and tickets. There will be
no refunds for tickets purchased.

Reading groups about Samuel Johnson and
Handel's music, are offered to participants
in November. For information call 387-8780.

LECTURE SUMMARIES

Thomas Laqueur:

I will begin by illustrating the centrality of London in the political, economic, and cultural life of England. My text here will be Defoe's famous account. I will suggest that one might talk about "the full tide of human experience" as cycles of life -- birth, marriage, and death -- among various strata of society. But instead, I will talk about the production and consumption of leisure pursuits in London -- center of the world's first consumer society. I will stretch the meaning of leisure a bit to include charitable activities like the Foundling Hospital, for whose benefit Handel's Messiah was performed in London.

Philip Brett:

The lecture will focus on the theater. In Handel's time, public concerts were a recent invention and not so important in the scheme of things. Besides his private service to James Bridges and the monarchy, Handel came to London to conquer the musical stage, and it was the theater audience he had to please in order to survive. Even the oratorio, after all, was something he put on in the theater at times when staged works were either not permitted (e.g. in Lent) or were out of fashion, as happened towards the end of Handel's life. It was in this context that Messiah was first presented in town (though its origin was of course in Dublin, and London audiences did not take to it until the 1750s when Handel gave annual charity performances at the Foundling Hospital, as well as regular ones at Covent Garden). Musical scholars have perhaps paid too little attention to the important shift of taste in the spoken theater at the time; this will be discussed in connection with Handel's fluctuating fortunes as a theater composer. Other aspects of London's musical life -- the larger churches, Chapel Royal, music at Vauxhall Gardens, and so on -- will be mentioned to fill out the picture.

Vance George:

"The Career of Messiah" will take a look at performance traditions and trends over two centuries. Reverence for Handel's masterpiece has led many to rescore, rework, and reinterpret for their particular era. A history of style and performance practice through recordings will highlight this presentation.

Louise Lippincott:

The key image in this talk will be Hogarth's The Enraged Musician which, at the simplest level, is an artistic image of noise in London. Like much of Hogarth's art it contains deeper and paradoxical statements, in this case about distinctions between art and noise. It compares the violinist's high art with popular street music; it confronts a serious professional artist with an audience of insensitive amateurs. Our sympathies can vary with our point of view.

While London grew in size, population, and wealth in the early eighteenth century, its community of painters, writers, dramatists, and musicians failed to keep pace with the market. The resulting outpouring of demand encouraged the importation of continental artists and art works. It also provoked native artists into shrill and bitter defenses of their suddenly fertile if not always fruitful turf. The competition between the two interest groups will be illustrated with visual satires by Hogarth and others which attack Handel, Italian opera, the Earl of Burlington, and other perceived threats to native art. Yet this conflict, though sharply drawn, was also artificial. London artists shared friendships, enmities, coffeehouses, patrons, printers, and an important common problem: how to educate English audiences to appreciate sophisticated art forms, and how these art forms might be adapted and made salable in protestant, individualistic England.

Inevitably compromises were made. Handel moved from Italian opera to English oratorio and Hogarth painted his English subjects while borrowing French motifs and styles. Neither could make a living from either the sensible or the extravagant aristocrats described in Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Burlington". Instead, like Pope, they dealt with a broader public through book and printsellers, the public theatre, the Foundling Hospital, and Vauxhall Gardens. Such collaborative ventures made welcome harmonies from London's noisy artistic controversies.

HANDEL'S LONDON: PATH TO MESSIAH

DECEMBER 5-6, 1986

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lecturers for the Handel program have recommended readings to enhance audience's understanding and participation in the event. Most of the suggestions will be readily available at either bookstores or public libraries.

Thomas Laqueur's (historian) suggestions:

The best general introduction to the social history of England is Roy Porter, English Society of the 18th Century, which is a Penguin paperback.

For a chronological account of the history of the 18th century, see J.H. Plum's, England in the 18th Century, which is also a Penguin paperback.

M. Dorothy George, London Life in the 18th Century

Boswell's London Journal 1762-1763 edited by Frederick A. Pottle, McGraw Hill paperback. A year in the life of the young Boswell, biographer of Samuel Johnson.

A.S. Turberville, English Man and Manners in the 18th Century

Philip Brett's (musicologist) suggestions:

The most readable of the recent spate of Handel biographies is the one by Jonathan Keates (1985). It is almost as good a read as Mainwaring's Memoirs (1760; reprinted 1964, 1967). Hogwood's Handel (1985) is well documented and richly illustrated. The finest book on Handel is without doubt Winton Dean's Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques (1959), but since Messiah is not a "dramatic" oratorio, it is treated largely as an anomalous work.

Bruce Robertson's (art historian) suggestions:

The best short treatment of 18th century English gardens is H.F. Clark, The English Landscape Garden (London, 1948). This is unfortunately long out-of-print. More recent is Christopher Hussey, English Gardens and Landscapes 1700-1750 (London, 1967). The chapters on English gardens in Christopher Thacker, A History of Gardens (UCal. Press, pbk) and Derek Clifford, History of Garden Design (London, 1966) are excellent.

Two more specialized studies worth reading are: Rudolf Wittkower, "English Neo-Palladianism...", Chapter 12, Palladio and English Palladianism (1974). This is the fundamental article on the meaning of liberty in English gardens. Kimerly Roschach, The Early Georgian Landscape Garden 1620-1820 (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1983). This is the most up-to-date, short survey.

If possible, it would be good to read the following primary sources contained in John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden 1620-1820 (New York, 1975): Joseph Addison (p. 138ff), Alexander Pope (p.211ff), William Shenstone (p.243ff) and Horace Walpole (p.313ff).

Louise Lippincott's (art historian) suggestions:

Jacob Simon, ed., Handel. A Celebration of His Life and Art, exh. cat., London, National Portrait Gallery, 8 November 1985 - 23 February 1986.

An exhibition composed for non-specialists to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Handel's birth. Use of a wide variety of visual material to reconstruct important aspects of Handel's life, music, friendships, patronage, and surroundings.

Apollo of the Arts. Lord Burlington and his Circle, exh. cat., Nottingham University Art Gallery, 1973.

The exhibition covers all aspects of Burlington's art patronage from music to literature, architecture, painting, and sculpture. Burlington's commitment to Italian style and his impact on contemporary taste are succinctly described.

Alexander Pope, Epistle to Burlington, Of the use of riches, ca 1732.

Brilliant satirical poem relating the excesses, successes, and failures of leading English patrons of the arts. Allied with Burlington and opposed by Hogarth, Pope was nevertheless sensitive to the faults of overenthusiastic art consumers.

Ronald Paulson, Hogarth. His Life, Art and Times, abridged ed.

Detailed and authoritative biography of the leading painter of Handel's era who was also the principal foe of Italianate art. Author or instigator of satires on Handel, Italianate music and painting; along with Pope, the most skilled and dedicated controversialist of the Georgian art world.

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